



# City of Fairfax, Virginia

## City Council Work Session

Agenda Item # 1

City Council Meeting 9/20/11

---

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

FROM: Robert Sisson, City Manager

SUBJECT: Discussion of a concept plan for redevelopment of George Mason Square, expansion of Pozer Park, and development of additional public open space and parking on the block that includes Old Town Hall.

---

**ISSUE(S):** Approximately \$2.4M remains from the bond issued for construction of the City of Fairfax Regional Library. These funds must be spent, and allowable expenses are limited to certain types of public improvements. Among these allowable improvements are those for urban open space, pedestrian facilities, park facilities, and parking. In addition, the City has \$400,000 in grant money earmarked for parking facilities. Attached is a concept plan for development of new facilities on the downtown block that includes Old Town Hall.

**SUMMARY:** The attached conceptual plan proposes development of a multi-use public plaza, expansion of Pozer Park, and development of permanent parking to replace the temporary parking currently on the former Weight Watchers' lot. The conceptual plans allow for the sale of two building sites and are expected to provide for retirement of the \$2.3M debt on the George Mason Square property. A substantial, permanent and highly viable public space at this location is expected to contribute to the City's long-standing job of making Old Town Fairfax an activity center and focal point for the City, and will complement and support the recent public and private investment in this area.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** An overall substantial net positive fiscal impact is expected. Annual revenues are expected to increase significantly by the increased real estate taxes due to construction of two buildings, and by new BPOL taxes associated with the businesses that would occupy the two new buildings. Annual expenditures are expected to be decreased significantly as a result of retirement of the debt on George Mason Square, but increased slightly due to maintenance of the public plaza, the fountain and the expanded Pozer Park.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Discussion

**ALTERNATIVE COURSE OF ACTION:** Postpone discussion to a future date or take action without another work session.

**RESPONSIBLE STAFF/POC:** Jack Blevins, AICP, Community Development Division Chief  
Geoff Durham, Economic Development Manager  
David Hudson, Director of Community Development and Planning

**COORDINATION:** Community Development and Planning, Parks & Recreation, Historic Resources, Public Works, and the City Attorney

**ATTACHMENT:** Staff Memo  
Attachment A: Concept Plan  
Attachment B: Street Furniture and Site Furnishings  
Attachment C: Parking Map

September 13, 2011

**TO:** Robert Sisson, City Manager

**THROUGH:** David Hudson, Director, Community Development and Planning

**FROM:** Jack Blevins, Community Development Chief

**SUBJECT:** George Mason Square Redevelopment  
Pozer Park Expansion  
Downtown Open Space Enhancements

---

### **Background**

On June 28, 2011 City Council discussed alternatives for the use of the remaining balance (approximately \$2.4 million) of funds raised through the sale of bonds for the construction of the new library. During that meeting, the Council discussed various alternatives that were identified by staff. Subsequent City Council discussions on August 27 refined the focus, calling for pedestrian, open space and parking improvements on the downtown block that includes Old Town Hall. An additional \$400,000 in grant money was identified as being available for the parking costs at this location. The City owns the former Weight Watchers site, and the Economic Development Authority (EDA) owns the George Mason Square site. Together with Pozer Park they make up the northern two-thirds of the block. The EDA owes \$2.3M on the George Mason Square site, which costs the City approximately \$120,000 annually in interest-only payments.

### **Concept Plan**

The attached Concept Plan ([Attachment A](#)) illustrates the approximate level of redevelopment that could be achieved on the block, including:

- ❖ Development of a new 5,000 SF public plaza with amphitheater-style seating that could potentially accommodate
  - Concerts,
  - A farmers' market,
  - Street fairs,
  - Splash fountains, and
  - An informal gathering place;
- ❖ Expansion of Pozer Park to the west to provide a fountain and a formal entrance from University Drive;
- ❖ Replacement of the temporary parking lot at the former Weight Watchers site with an equal number of spaces in new permanent lots;
- ❖ Sale of two building sites to accommodate a two story building at the corner of Old Lee Highway and North Street with a 6,000 SF footprint and another two story building on the east side of Pozer Park and fronting on North Street having a 4,000 SF footprint. Together they would provide 10,000 SF retail and 10,000 SF office; and

- ❖ Installation of street furniture, site furnishings and landscaping designed to promote the historic character of the site. (See Attachment B for suggested character of design for these elements.)

#### **Available Funds and Anticipated Costs**

Both the \$2.4M remaining from the library construction and the \$400,000 grant are available almost immediately to begin work. All of the costs associated with development of the public infrastructure for the Site Concept can be covered with this \$2.8M, with approximately \$750,000 remaining.

Remaining Library Funds	\$2,400,000
Two Grants	\$400,000
<b>Initial Funding</b>	<b>\$2,800,000</b>
Infrastructure Cost	-\$1,368,750
30% Contingency	-\$467,625
Subtotal Construction	-\$1,836,375
Site Furniture	-\$151,000
Furniture Contingency	-\$45,300
<b>Public Development Cost</b>	<b>-\$2,032,675</b>
<b>Funds Remaining</b>	<b>\$767,325</b>

*Source: Patton, Harris, Rust & Associates, August 2011*

Commitment to build the public infrastructure will make the two available building sites more desirable. The City can market the properties at current market per-square-foot value, combine the proceeds with the funds remaining after development of the infrastructure, and have enough funds to retire the debt on the George Mason Square property.

<b>Sale of Building Pad Sites</b>	<b>\$1,540,000<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Funds Remaining after Infrastructure Development</b>	<b>\$767,325</b>
<b>Available to Retire Debt</b>	<b>\$2,307,325</b>
Retire Debt	-\$2,300,000
<b>Funds Available After Retiring Debt</b>	<b>\$7,325</b>

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: City of Fairfax Real Estate Office

## **Parking**

Two parking lots would be removed from the block as a result of the proposed redevelopment. The Weight Watchers temporary lot has 39 parking spaces (plus two adjoining loading spaces available on the Old Town Hall lot). These spaces are nearly always full during midday weekday hours and would need to be replaced as part of the redevelopment plans.


The George Mason Square temporary lot has 32 marked parking spaces. Most of these are rarely used, and their use appears to be associated only with the businesses located at George Mason Square. These spaces would not need to be replaced; however, parking would need to be provided for the new buildings.

The Concept Plan proposes to replace the 39 spaces from the Weight Watchers temporary lot by constructing two new lots on the block. The first would be an 11-space lot off University Drive adjacent to Old Town Hall. This lot would also replace the two loading spaces for Old Town Hall. The second would be a 28-space lot off North Street. This second lot would be covered with a parking deck of 26 additional spaces, accessible from the parking area just north of Draper House. The upper spaces, together with some of the spaces north of Draper House, could serve the businesses in the two new buildings.

In addition to the parking spaces available on this block the City has a substantial number of spaces spread throughout the downtown area. Altogether, under the proposed concept, at least 243 public parking spaces would always be available within one block of the block that includes The Auld Shebeen, Icons and Old Fire Station #3. During times when the Bank of America and the Library are closed the City has arranged for an additional 300 spaces to be available within this same perimeter. In addition, during the City's special events, the 700+ spaces in the County's public parking garages at the Judicial Center, the 180 spaces at City Hall and the 73 spaces at the Community Center would be available, though much less conveniently located to the downtown businesses. Together with the City's 30-space lot adjacent to Truro Church, as many as 2,000 spaces could be made available during certain hours. See Attachment C for a map and further details about these parking areas.

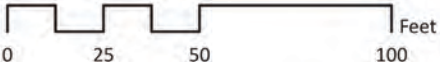





**City of Fairfax**  
Community Development & Planning

**George Mason Square**  
**CONCEPT PLAN**

September 13, 2011

  
1 inch = 50 feet



## George Mason Square & Pozer Park

Street Furniture &  
Site Furnishings

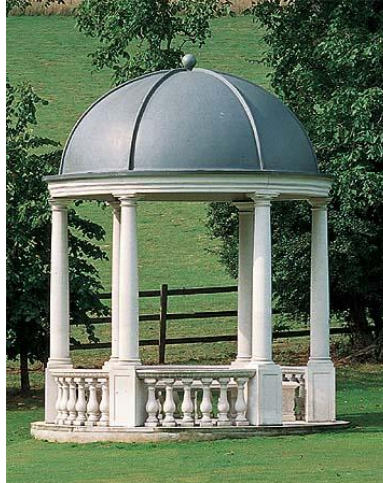
September 14, 2011



Community  
Development  
and  
Planning

**Cast Stone Temple: \$ 26,000**

*Haddonstone (w/ fiberglass dome)*



**Cast Iron Kiosk: \$12,000**



**Cast Stone Fountain:**

*Eton College Fountain (Haddonstone)*



**Pool Surround (for fountain) priced with fountain: \$38,000**  
*(Haddonstone)*



**Cast Iron Vendor Shelter: \$65,000**  
*(Neri)*



**Timber Pergola: \$10,000**  
*(Custom, local)*



### Notes:

All prices include item purchase, shipping, installation, and any necessary utilities. Timber pergola would be stick-built on-site; all others will require months for delivery.

# Parking old Town Fairfax

Public Parking Lots  
Private Parking Lots  
On-Street Parking

